Registration is open for Winter 2026 semester at WCC

Registration is open for the 2026 Winter Semester that begins January 12 at Washtenaw Community College.

Class registration and enrollment applications are available in simple online steps at wccnet.edu/enroll, or in person at the Student Welcome Center on the second floor of the Student Center on campus.

FLEXIBILE EDUCATION

WCC offers flexible scheduling across 143 programs, including 50 fully online, helping students launch rewarding, high-demand careers or transfer to a bachelor's degree program.

In addition to the traditional in-person format, classes are offered online and on weekends to accommodate adult learners with busy schedules.

FOUR START DATES

WCC offers four start dates to accommodate student schedules and lifestyles. Classes with later start dates include the same material at an accelerated pace.

The four starts for the 2026 Winter Semester are:

- Monday, January 12
- Tuesday, February 3
- Tuesday, February 17
- Thursday, March 12

LOW TUITION RATES

WCC's tuition is $99 per credit for in-district students, lowest in the state. Multiple types of scholarships and financial assistance are available. Visit wccnet.edu/afford for details.

NEW PROGRAMS

For the 2025-26 academic year, WCC launched five new academic pathways – associate degrees and certificates in Engineering Technology and Construction Technology, as well as a Semiconductor & Battery Manufacturing Advanced Certificate. See a full list of programs sorted alphabetically or by pathways at wccnet.edu/learn. ●

Call 734-973-3543 or email go2wcc@wccnet.edu for more information.

Washtenaw Community College

ON THE RECORD

wccnet.edu/news /WashtenawCC @WashtenawCC @WashtenawCC NOVEMBER 2025

60 YEARS, 60 STORIES

We're sharing 60 alumni success stories. Meet a mother-daughter nursing duo and a man who found his path as an adult learner. **PAGE 4**

EARN CREDIT FOR YOUR EXPERIENCE

Exercise Science major Emma McClorey, who previously earned an EMT license, is one of more than 500 WCC students to earn credits for prior learning during the past academic year. **PAGE 5**

PROTECT & SERVE

Recent WCC Police Academy graduates are now serving six different Washtenaw County agencies, including the college's own Public Safety Department. **PAGE 6**

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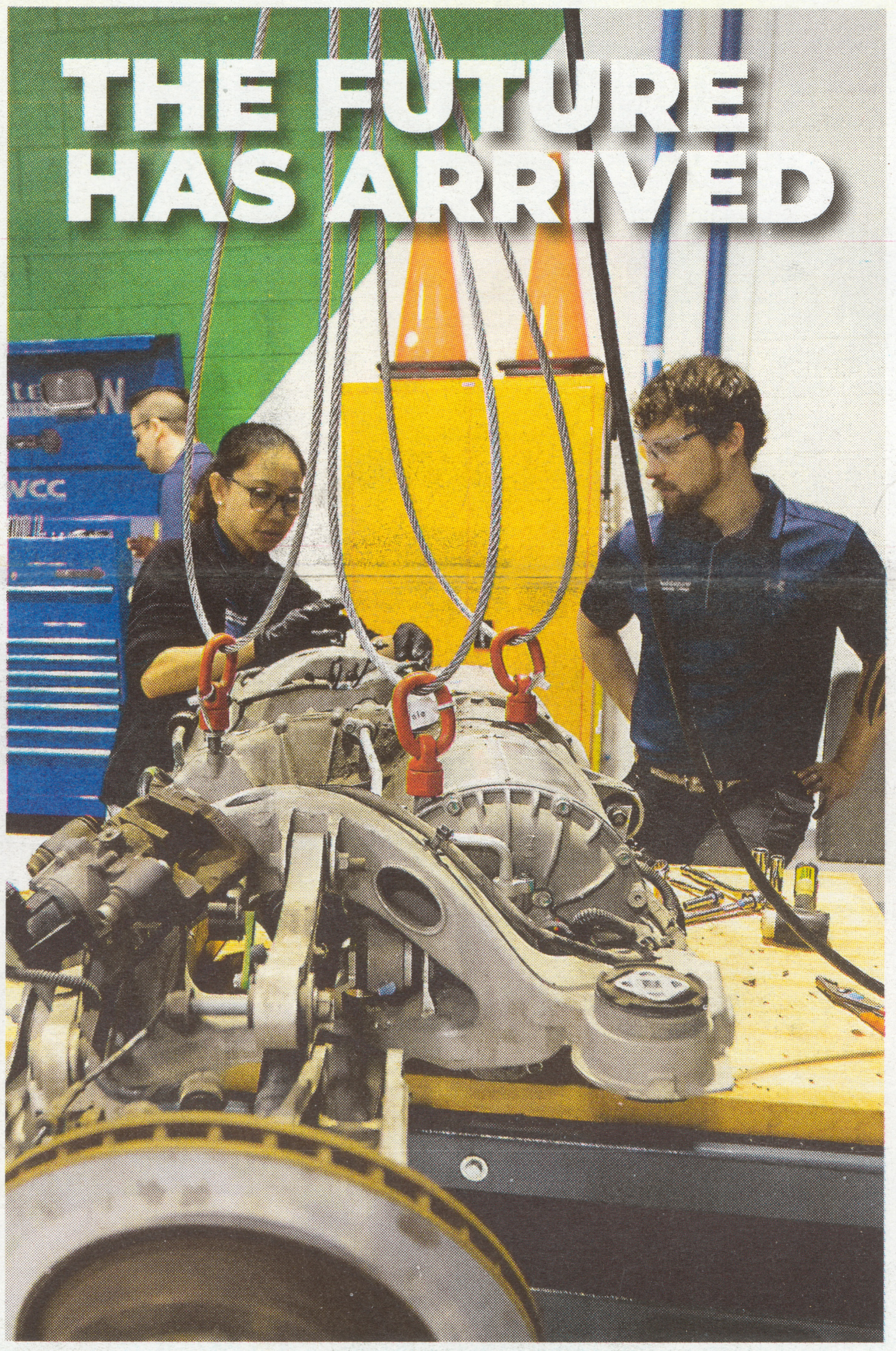

WCC POWERS UP NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE LAB

WCC students service the rear drive unit of an electric vehicle in the college's new Electric Vehicle and Battery Lab. A recent ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the lab, where students power up their skills and learn the systems driving the future. Read more on **PAGE 3**

WCC's new workforce lab is no-cost to county residents

Washtenaw Community College has launched a new Workforce Foundation Skills Lab, offering no-cost math and career readiness training.

It is designed to help Washtenaw County residents age 18-and-over to strengthen essential skills, build confidence and prepare for advancement in Michigan's rapidly evolving workforce.

The new lab is the only program of its kind in Southeast Michigan focused on helping adults improve skills required by more than 80% of today's most in-demand jobs.

By focusing on the math and professional skills employers value most, the Workforce Foundation Skills Lab serves as an important first step toward job success.

"Employers need skilled workers, and workers need accessible, high-quality training that leads to good jobs," said WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca. "Many adults find themselves in need of a math refresh and the lab will provide them a place to get that when it is most convenient for them."

The new skills lab, which opened on November 17, is located in the Morris Lawrence Building on the WCC campus and is open on the following dates and times:

- Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Tuesdays and Thursdays: 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- Saturdays: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In Southeast Michigan, industries such as healthcare, IT, manufacturing, mobility and the skilled trades continue to face a growing need for both advanced technical and professional skills. According to the World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report,* six in 10 employees will require training by 2030.

The Workforce Foundation Skills Lab helps residents build the confidence and core knowledge to meet those demands.

The Workforce Foundation Skills Lab is operated by the college's Economic, Workforce & College Development Division.

For more information, visit wccnet.edu/skills-lab, email eccdoperations@wccnet.edu or call 734-390-WORK (9675). ●

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE!

WCC supports adult learners' success! Scan the code or visit washtenaw.cc/adults to download our "Success Guide for Adult Learners."

Washtenaw Community College

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Publisher: Rose B. Bellanca, Ed.D.
President, WCC

Executive Editor: Lori Mouton
Chief Marketing & Communications Officer

Editor/Designer: Rich Rezler
Communications Director

Writer: Fran LeFort
Media Relations Director

Comments and suggestions are welcomed. Email editor Rich Rezler at rrezler@wccnet.edu or call 734-973-3629.

Washtenaw Community College strives to make a positive difference in people's lives through accessible and excellent educational programs and services.

On the Record is written and designed by the WCC Marketing and Communications Department, Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-4800.

Questions about the WCC programs and services described in this publication should be directed to the Office of Admissions at 734-973-3543.

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Washtenaw Community College is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, Illinois 60604-1411; 800-621-7440; hlcommision.org. Call 734-973-3300 for information about Washtenaw Community College.

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Washtenaw Community College does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other protected status in its programs and activities. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Vice President of Student Services, SC 251, 734-973-3536. Facility access inquiries: V.P. of Facilities, Development & Operations, PO 112, 734-677-5322. If you have a disability and require accommodation to participate in an on-campus event, contact Learning Support Services at 734-973-3342 to request accommodations at least 72 hours in advance. © 2023 Washtenaw Community College.

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The Student-Right-to-Know and The Crime Awareness & Campus Security Act of 1990 (also known as the Clery Act) requires institutions to disclose information about graduation rates, crime statistics, and security information to current and prospective students. Individuals interested in obtaining this type of information should contact the Dean of Students office at 734-973-3328. Copyright 2022 Washtenaw Community College.

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WCC President

NEWS IN BRIEF

Skilled trades program receives grant from GM

Washtenaw Community College is one of three area non-profits selected to receive a Community Impact Grant from the General Motors Romulus Propulsion Systems plant.

Through its corporate giving program, GM facility leaders selected local nonprofits working to address issues facing their community. The three recipients will split a $40,000 donation.

"Our Community Impact Grants play a vital role in empowering local nonprofits that truly make a difference in the neighborhoods where our teams live and work," said plant director Mark Dickman. "Witnessing the positive changes brought about by these grants and the remarkable efforts of nonprofits in our community underscores just how essential this support is for building a thriving, connected community."

The other local non-profits selected to receive a grant were Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Southeast Michigan and the Eastern Michigan University Institute for STEM Education, Outreach and Workforce Development.

This is the 15th year of GM's national corporate giving program, providing financial support to nonprofits across its U.S. manufacturing communities. As an organization, GM is committed to investing in the future of American manufacturing, in our workforce and in our communities.

WCC participates in mobility conferences

WCC reinforced its leadership role in the state's growing mobility and semiconductor ecosystem when college representatives participated in two key industry gatherings held back-to-back at Michigan Central in Detroit.

WCC Executive Vice President for Instruction Dr. Brandon R. Tucker was invited to speak and serve on panels at both the 2025 Center for Automotive Research Management Briefing Seminars (CAR MBS) and the 2025 MSTAR Automotive Semiconductor Forum.

Tucker highlighted the critical role education plays in preparing the workforce to be a key driver in Michigan's mobility future.

His remarks tied directly to WCC's new electric vehicle lab and semiconductor education programs, both designed to provide hands-on training for the next generation of chip and EV component technicians.

WCC's participation underscores the college's commitment to developing Michigan's mobility and semiconductor talent pipeline through cutting-edge programs and industry partnerships.

New Super STEAM Saturday schedule

A new season of Super STEAM Saturdays offering middle schoolers the chance to explore and learn about science, technology, engineering, arts and math are back at WCC.

Super STEAM Saturdays occur monthly and are designed with middle schoolers in mind, although younger and older students are welcome.

WCC faculty members and leaders from STEM career fields lead activities.

Workshops scheduled for the Winter 2026 semester include:

- "Science Poetry" on January 31
- "Introduction to 3D Modeling with Onshape & 3D Printing" on February 7
- "Stories and STEAM: A Super STEAM Saturday/STEAM Week Event for the Whole Family" on February 28
- "Anatomy & Physiology Exploration on the Anatomage Table" on March 28
- "WCC Nature Trail Walk" on April 25.

Sessions are free, but registration is required. Most workshops are held in person on the WCC campus, with some virtual sessions planned.

For a full description of each workshop and a link to registration, visit washtenaw.cc/SuperSTEAM. ●

FREE PRODUCE DAYS

What's better than fresh produce? Free fresh produce!

The WCC Student Resource Center hosts a series of Free Produce Days on the WCC campus, passing out a variety of free vegetables to students and employees. The events are sponsored by the WCC Foundation in partnership with The Farm at Trinity Health Ann Arbor.

CAMPUS CALENDAR

CAMPUS EVENTS

FALL SEMESTER ENDS

12/14 The final day of the current Fall 2025 semester is Sunday, December 14. The college will be closed from Wednesday, December 24 through Thursday, January 1 for its holiday break.

WINTER SEMESTER BEGINS

1/12 The Winter 2026 semester at WCC begins on Monday, January 12. Additional session start dates include Tuesday, February 3; Tuesday, February 17; and Thursday, March 12. Find details about applying and enrolling at wccnet.edu/enroll.

DETROIT AUTO SHOW

1/14 WCC's Advanced Transportation Center will exhibit its offerings at the Detroit Auto Show's Media and Industry Days on Wednesday, January 14 and Thursday, January 15. A leader among its peers in training students for mobility jobs of the future, WCC be exhibiting during the AutoMobili-D Days.

MLK CELEBRATION

1/15 WCC's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration will be held on Thursday, January 15 on the second floor of the Student Center. A brief reception will follow an hour-long program that includes speakers and the presentation of the college's annual Equity in Action Awards. Free and open to the public.

Washtenaw Community College

CORPORATE TRAINING & LIFELONG LEARNING

Register for these non-credit classes and see a complete list of available topics at wccnet.edu/noncredit.

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL
The Art, Science and Reciprocity of Eco-Creativity

12/1 This course highlights how meaningful and impactful poems, stories, paintings and assemblages can emerge through co-creating with the Earth. Drawing inspiration from visionary artists and writers, explore multiple mediums and experience the regenerative benefits of collaborating with our environments.

Mondays, Dec. 1-15 (three sessions)
Location: Webinar
Cost: $189

COMPUTER BASICS
Advancing in Google Drive and Docs

12/2 Master the fundamentals of creating, formatting and sharing documents, spreadsheets, presentations and forms with Google Drive. Get tips on organizing and searching and using the many features available through this platform.

Tuesdays & Thursdays, Dec. 2-18 (six sessions)
Location: Webinar
Cost: $189

FOOD AND DRINK
Italian Cooking: Christmas Day Supper

12/3 Learn to make a beef tenderloin rolled with sauteed mushrooms and fresh herbs, homemade ravioli filled with cheese and prosciutto, baked fennel au gratin and Grand Marnier tiramisu.

Wednesday, Dec. 3
Location: Dixboro United Methodist Church
Cost: $30

HANDCRAFTING
Holiday Crafting Workshop

12/7 Make decorative clay pots from yarn to hold cookies or other baked items, a painted gingerbread jar for storing peppermints or marshmallows, a snowy and scented mason jar candle and bath bombs.

Monday, Dec. 7
Location: On campus
Cost: $20, plus $15 mandatory fee

CREATIVE WRITING
Writing for Magazines and Newspapers

12/8 Discover the many paths to publishing a book, poem or article. Learn the advantages and disadvantages of self-publishing vs traditional publishing and the ways to market your product.

Mondays, Dec. 8-15 (two sessions)
Location: Webinar
Cost: $75

VISUAL ARTS
Water-Mixable Oils: Beaches

12/8 Life is a beach, with its salty air, windblown hair, sandy toes, and sun-kissed nose! Let's have some fun and paint our favorite beach and such on canvas with our water mixable oils.

Mondays, Dec. 8-15 (two sessions)
Location: Webinar
Cost: $65

MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP
Becoming a First-Time Manager

This class provides a new, friendly approach for those charged with the task of management. It encourages those taking on the challenges of supervision and provides fast, powerful lessons to help increase productivity, work with different types of people, communicate effectively, and diagnose problems. .

Self-paced, start upon registration
Location: Webinar
Cost: $195

Charging ahead: WCC opens new EV lab

PHOTOS BY JD SCOTT

Performing the honors at the WCC Electric Vehicle and Battery Lab ribbon cutting were (from left) WCC Board of Trustees members Eileen Peck and William G. Milliken Jr., WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca, U.S. Representative Debbie Dingell, WCC Dean of Career & Technical Education Eva Samulski and WCC Executive Vice President for Instruction Dr. Brandon R. Tucker.

By FRAN LeFORT
Director of Media Relations

Washtenaw Community College unveiled a new electric vehicle (EV) and battery lab during a special ceremony to educate students in the next generation of automotive transportation.

The space is equipped with lifts and charging stations to train students for maintenance and repair on hybrid and electric vehicles, as well as electric battery workbenches to ensure students are ready for the emerging workforce.

The college has worked with industry to launch new EV programs and certificates to meet talent needs.

“For 60 years, Washtenaw Community College has been vital to Michigan’s workforce development ecosystem,” said WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca. “Over a decade ago, we took the bold step to prepare students for evolving mobility careers with our Advanced Transportation Center. Today’s EV lab ribbon cutting isn’t just about opening a new lab, it’s about opening opportunity for our students, our region and our state.”

Wesley Parks, a technician apprentice at the Genthe Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram dealership in Saline, is one of the first students to use the lab. He is pursuing an Electric Vehicle Service Technician certificate.

“I’ve been in the automotive field for two years now and only recently – through taking the electric vehicle program – I have found a love and interest in all things high voltage,” Parks told the gathered attendees.

“With the help from our stunning new lab, as well as our fantastic teachers, I hope to branch off from the traditional vehicle apprenticeship and make steps toward an EV-focused career.

Visitors to the EV Lab ribbon cutting examine a battery unit from a Tesla connected to a testing device that checks its power, temperature and wiring to ensure it’s in proper working condition.

“With the shortage of technicians, it is very important to give students the opportunity to find something that interests them and keeps their passion for the job high.”

The lab was completed with a Congressional earmark secured by Michigan’s delegation in 2023.

“I’m proud to have helped secure $2.5 million in federal funding to bring the Washtenaw Community College electric vehicle training lab to life,” said U.S. Representative Debbie Dingell, who attended the ribbon-cutting.

“Michigan has always been at the heart of American manufacturing, and if we want to remain a global leader in innovation and technology, we must lead the transition to electric vehicles. Programs like this are critical to keeping us competitive in the international marketplace.”

U.S. Senator Gary Peters also helped secure the funding.

“As electric vehicles become more commonplace, it’s essential that Michigan has the skilled workers needed to build the battery components and electric infrastructure that keep them on our roadways,” Peters said in a statement. “(The lab) will help address our workforce needs and bring good paying jobs to Michigan communities.” ●

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN WCC’S NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE & BATTERY LAB?

Students from a variety of WCC programs will be found participating in hands-on training inside the new Electric Vehicle & Battery Lab.

The college has added an Electric Vehicle Service & Repair track to its Transportation Technologies associate degree offerings, as well as an Electric Vehicle Safety & Fundamentals certificate and an Electric Vehicle Service Technician certificate.

On other days, you might find a student who is following the Semiconductor and Battery Manufacturing concentration in a new Engineering Technology associate degree program. Or the new Semiconductor & Battery Manufacturing advanced certificate.

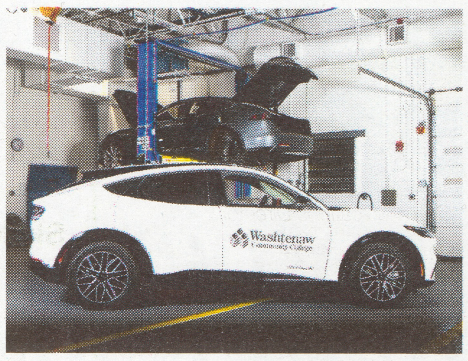

PHOTO BY JD SCOTT

The new electric vehicle and batter lab space at WCC includes a stable of electric vehicles on which students receive hands-on training.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Preparing the workforce of tomorrow starts today

By DR. ROSE B. BELLANCA
WCC President

At Washtenaw Community College, our mission has always been rooted in the future – preparing students not only for today’s jobs, but for the opportunities that will define tomorrow.

For 60 years, WCC has served as a bridge between education and opportunity – empowering individuals, supporting families, and fueling local industry. We know that access to affordable, high-quality education transforms lives and strengthens the fabric of our community.

We see our role as both educator and community builder, ensuring the talent developed in Washtenaw County continues to strengthen our local economy and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives here.

That role is on full display with the opening of our new Electric Vehicle and Battery Lab.

This state-of-the-art space represents far more than an investment in technology – it’s an investment in Michigan’s future.

> “We see our role as both educator and community builder, ensuring the talent developed in Washtenaw County continues to strengthen our local economy and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives here.”
>
> **Dr. Rose B. Bellanca**
> **WCC President**

The lab gives students hands-on experience with electric vehicle systems, charging infrastructure, and battery diagnostics, while ensuring local employers have access to the skilled technicians and engineers they need to stay competitive.

Electric vehicles are transforming transportation, and Michigan – the birthplace of the automotive industry – is once again leading the next revolution in mobility.

Through innovative facilities like this, WCC helps keep our region at the forefront of that transformation.

This is what WCC does best: we listen to our industry partners, understand their challenges, and create programs that meet real-world demands.

Whether in manufacturing, health care, information technology, or business, we continue to design flexible, relevant pathways that connect education directly to high-wage, high-demand careers.

We’re proud to be a driving force in Michigan’s workforce development ecosystem – a trusted partner to employers and a launchpad for students.

And as the world continues to change, one thing will remain constant: our focus on preparing students to succeed in whatever the future holds. ●

60 STORIES: EDUCATING GENERATIONS

Daughter follows mother's footsteps to nursing career

By RICH REZLER
Director of Communications

When Seema Awan walks across the stage at Washtenaw Community College's nursing pinning ceremony this December, it will be a full-circle moment for her family.

The 22-year-old will not only celebrate completing WCC's respected nursing program – she'll also follow in the footsteps of her mother, Anna, who began her own nursing journey at the college a decade ago.

During WCC's 60th anniversary celebration, the Awans' story is a fitting tribute to the college's legacy of shaping futures across generations.

Seema, a 2021 Ann Arbor Huron High School graduate, began taking prerequisite courses at WCC soon after graduation and entered the nursing program in January 2024.

"It's actually gone by pretty fast," she said. "I felt like it was going to take forever, but now I can't believe there's less than two months left."

FAMILY DRAWN TO NURSING

For Seema, her mother's path led the way to the WCC nursing program.

"My mom was in nursing school when I was in middle and high school," Seema said. "We would sit at the kitchen table and do homework together. She'd tell me what she learned that day and ask me to quiz her. Everything about it seemed really interesting."

For Anna Awan, the call to nursing was deeply personal.

"Seema was in the NICU after she was born, so I saw firsthand how the nurses cared for her and supported me," she said. "That stayed with me forever. I knew one day I would go back to school and become a nurse."

After the family moved from Virginia to Ann Arbor for her husband's job, Anna seized the opportunity. She completed the Washtenaw County higher education trifecta, earning an associate degree in nursing from WCC, a bachelor's of nursing from Eastern Michigan University and a graduate degree from the University of Michigan to become a Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner. She now works at Trinity Health Ann Arbor Hospital.

THE BEST ROLE MODEL

Seema admits she's often in awe of her mother.

"Sometimes I think about what she did and it's crazy – she was a mom, working part-time and doing grad school," she said. "I live at home and have a pretty chill life and I'm always thinking, 'This is hard!'"

Anna remains her daughter's "personal nursing dictionary." When Seema hits a tough topic, her mom offers advice – or calls a colleague for help.

That mentorship came full circle when Seema shadowed her mother during a night shift at Trinity Health.

"I always assumed she was a pretty good nurse," Seema said. "But after watching her, I realized she's really, really good at this."

Seema plans to begin her career in an intensive care unit before pursuing certification as a nurse anesthetist.

"The ICU is a good way to make sure you know your skills," she said.

Anna couldn't be prouder.

"When she told me she wanted to go to nursing school, I was emotional," she said. "It gave me a chance to reflect back on my journey too. But I would cheer her on every step of the way, whether she decided to go into nursing or not."

As Seema prepares to join the next generation of WCC nursing alumni, the Awan family embodies the college's enduring legacy – hard work, opportunity and the power of education to change not just one life, but generations of them. ●

This is a condensed version of a longer story available at wccnet.edu/news.

PHOTOS BY JD SCOTT

Ann Arbor Huron High School graduate Seema Award (right) will soon graduate from the same WCC nursing program that her mother, Anna, completed.

Sharing WCC Success Stories

To celebrate its upcoming 60th anniversary, WCC is sharing stories of 60 alumni whose lives and careers reflect the promise and impact of a WCC education.

If you are a WCC alumni (or part of a multi-generation WCC family, like the Awans) and are willing to share your success story, please fill out the form that can be found at washtenaw.cc/60alumni.

Washtenaw Community College
60 YEARS
OPENING DOORS
1966 - 2026

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60 STORIES: ADULT LEARNER

From GED to GM: The path started at WCC

By RICH REZLER
Director of Communications

John Benjamin is Chief of Staff for General Motors' Autonomous Vehicle Product Management team, a role that centers on relationship-building, coordinating across teams in Michigan and Silicon Valley, and advancing his leadership's vision.

His path to the cutting edge of automotive technology wasn't a straight line.

The Ypsilanti native's teenage years were tumultuous. "School was not working for me," he says. "I struggled through a lot of different courses."

Benjamin earned his GED at the age of 16 through Washtenaw Community College's Adult Transitions Program. For several years, he worked full-time and "did my own thing," putting higher education aside until his mid-20s.

In 2007, Benjamin moved to Texas to pursue a career in hydraulics, but was back home by 2010.

He came to WCC interested in bettering himself through a skilled trades program that required some general education courses to complete with an associate degree. Much to his surprise, he performed quite well in math and science classes.

From there, his plans changed dramatically.

"I dove in, took practically every math course at WCC, and built up the resume needed to transfer to the University of Michigan," he says.

For Benjamin, WCC was a place to rebuild confidence.

"I looked around the classroom and I wasn't the old guy. I was surrounded by people coming back and trying to improve themselves," he said. "It felt like a level plane to learn and grow in."

Benjamin earned an Associate Degree in General Studies in Math & Natural Sciences before transferring to the University of Michigan, where he completed a Mechanical Engineering degree in 2016.

While attending U-M, Benjamin started an automotive engineering career that included stops with Nexteer Automotive, NSK America Corp, Adient and General Motors.

"If I could have just dropped straight into the University of Michigan, there's no way I would have been successful," he says. "I built the confidence I needed to succeed at WCC."

Benjamin, who still spends plenty of time in his carpentry workshop, maintains he could have had a very successful and satisfying life in the trades. The biggest difference with this white collar career, he jokes, is that he "can take nicer trips now."

From GED student to organizational leader, Benjamin credits WCC with providing the foundation to explore multiple paths and succeed on his own terms.

"My experience at Washtenaw was amazing. It gave me the ability to reset, take a step back and I've been forever grateful," he says. ●

This is a condensed version of a longer story available at wccnet.edu/news.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN BENJAMIN

As an adult student, John Benjamin discovered a love of math and science at WCC that would lead him to a mechanical engineering career.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROMAN KARAS

Roman Karas, a Washtenaw Technical Middle College student enrolled in Washtenaw Community College classes, was named Ernst & Young Youth Entrepreneur of the Year for Michigan and Northwest Ohio.

STUDENT PROFILE: ROMAN KARAS

Teen innovator changing healthcare one app at a time

At 17, Washtenaw Community College student Roman Karas is running four startups, giving TEDx talks, and planning to use entrepreneurship to make healthcare more accessible and affordable.

A fourth-year Washtenaw Technical Middle College student enrolled in a full schedule of WCC courses, Karas was recently named the 2025 Ernst & Young Youth Entrepreneur of the Year for Michigan and Northwest Ohio.

His entrepreneurial journey gained attention earlier this year when he co-founded Athletassist, a business that earned third place nationally in the Junior Achievement Social Innovation Challenge for its approach to youth sports injury management.

"What excites me most about entrepreneurship is the opportunity to create change," Karas said. "Even small improvements in health can transform someone's life."

Alongside Athletassist, Karas founded three additional ventures:

- A2 Lytix provides schools and sports programs with data-driven insights to monitor health risks and team performance.
- Brain Buddy helps student-athletes recovering from concussions communicate effectively with coaches and caregivers.
- CloudSit offers waterproof, affordable outdoor cushions inspired by a personal frustration.

Karas credits much of his growth to guidance received from the WCC Entrepreneurship Center and research assistance from the college's Bailey Library.

"Roman's journey is a remarkable example of Washtenaw Community College's mission in action," said MariAnn Apley, Start-Up Manager at the Entrepreneurship Center. "His creativity, perseverance, and leadership have taken him from Pitch@WCC to national competitions and now to recognition as Youth Entrepreneur of the Year. We are proud to see him embody the entrepreneurial spirit fostered here at the Entrepreneurship Center."

Karas also spoke at April's TEDxWCC, focusing on health equity and athlete support.

"He showed a strong commitment to ensuring that every student could participate in athletics safely and confidently," said Dena Blair, chair of WCC's Communication, Media and Theatre Arts department.

The Ernst & Young award includes a $2,000 scholarship.

After completing his General Studies in Math and Natural Sciences associate degree at WCC, Karas will use that scholarship to study entrepreneurship and health sciences at a four-year college, aiming to lead projects that make health solutions accessible, affordable, and culturally relevant. ●

This is a condensed version of a longer story available at wccnet.edu/news.

Turn your experience into college credit

By KAYLA GAHAGAN
Special to WCC

As Emma McClorey can testify, there is no such thing as wasted learning.

McClorey is one of thousands of adult learners who have benefitted from Washtenaw Community College's Credit for Prior Learning program, which awards credit for what adults already know.

"When I transferred to WCC, they accepted not only my previous credits from another community college, but also my EMT license," McClorey said. "That saved me an incredible amount of time and money. I transferred around 23 credits that contributed to my degree."

McClorey's career goal is to work as a pediatric physician assistant. She's currently pursuing an Exercise Science associate degree at WCC and is following one of the college's 3+1 articulation agreements with Eastern Michigan to earn her bachelor's degree in just one year.

WCC credit may be awarded for knowledge and skills gained on the job, in the military, while earning career credentials, prior education, or simply through life experience.

Students have earned credit for prior learning in 138 of WCC's programs, most commonly in Health Care Foundations; Transportation Technologies; Public Service Careers; Humanities, Languages and the Arts; and Math, Science & Pre-Engineering.

Transferring courses is the most common way to earn credit.

"As long as the course outcomes, credit hours and contact hours match up, those credits can usually transfer right in as a direct equivalent," says WCC Dean of Career & Technical Education Eva Samulski.

McClorey says credit for prior learning changed the trajectory of her career.

"Through my work experience and WCC's acceptance of it, I've been able to keep pursuing an affordable education," she says. "I am extremely lucky and grateful." ●

For more information about WCC's Credit for Prior Learning program, visit wccnet.edu/prior-learning.

"When I transferred to WCC, they accepted not only my previous credits from another community college, but also my EMT licence. That saved me an incredible amount of time and money."

— Emma McClorey
Exercise Science Student

PHOTO BY JD SCOTT

WCC Exercise Science student Emma McClorey turned the EMT license she earned previously into Credits for Prior Learning at WCC.

RECEIVE COLLEGE CREDIT FOR WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY LEARNED

If you have skills learned through school, training or work experience, WCC will work with you to turn it into a head start on a degree or certificate.

Once your skills are documented and deemed equivalent to college-level coursework, credit will be granted if it's appropriate for your program of study.

Learn more at wccnet.edu/prior-learning.

WCC honored as leader in sustainability efforts

Washtenaw Community College was recognized for its commitment to sustainability when it received the 2025 Washtenaw County Environmental Excellence Award for Waste Reduction and Recycling.

The award, presented by the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office, highlights the college's outstanding efforts in reducing waste, recycling, and composting on campus.

The award was presented November 6 during the annual Environmental Excellence Awards ceremony.

WCC's recycling and sustainability initiatives have been wide-ranging.

Alongside recycling containers placed throughout classrooms, offices and outdoor spaces, the college hosts bi-annual Resource Recovery events, allowing departments to repurpose usable office supplies instead of sending them to the landfill. Anything not reused by college employees finds its way to the WCC Surplus Store on publicsurplus.com.

Earlier this year, WCC banned the sale of plastic water bottles on campus, replacing them with aluminum and cardboard alternatives, and upgraded multiple water fountains to include bottle-filling stations.

The college has also partnered with concessions provider Creative Dining to organize "zero waste" meal events, providing compostable supplies and eliminating single-use plastics.

In March, the expansion of food waste composting at the Morris Lawrence Building diverted 800 pounds of food waste in its first month.

WCC's Recycle Operations Department continues to work with My Green Michigan to compost tableware from these zero-waste events. ●

A commitment to our veterans

Washtenaw Community College has been named a Gold-level Veteran-Friendly School for the eighth consecutive year by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency.

The designation recognizes institutions committed to supporting veterans and military-connected students.

"This recognition reflects the respect and gratitude we hold for our veteran students and their families," said WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca.

"We're proud to set a standard of excellence in creating an environment where veterans can thrive academically and personally, and reach their career goals."

For 2025-2026, WCC again earned the highest Gold-level status and also received the MVAA School Education Innovator Award for hosting Veterans Adventure League, a tabletop game designed to foster connection, promote mental wellness, and address challenges facing veterans.

"Our veterans went above and beyond in service to our country, and it's an honor to serve and support them," said Carol Osborne, Manager of WCC's Wadhams Veterans Center. "We will continue to be creative in this commitment."

WCC serves more than 500 military-affiliated students, including veterans, active-duty personnel, National Guard and Reserve members, and their families.

The Wadhams Veterans Center in the Student Center provides benefit assistance, study spaces, and a welcoming community.

WCC also sponsors a Student Veterans of America Club.

Gold-level status is based on veteran-specific services such as career resources, advising, credit for military training, and maintaining an on-campus veterans coordinator. ●

HONORING OUR VETERANS

From an early morning flag-raising (above) to a special mid-day celebration, WCC honored the courage and sacrifice of America's service members on Veterans Day. Fisher House Michigan executive director Kate Melcher (left) was the keynote speaker.

Ready to Protect & Serve

WCC Police Academy trains next generation of Washtenaw County law enforcement

By RICH REZLER
Director of Communications

The Washtenaw Community College Police Academy recently celebrated its 55th graduating class.

Recruits in the 42-member Class of 2025 are now employed by 20 different law enforcement agencies around the state of Michigan, including six located in Washtenaw County: the Chelsea Police Department, Eastern Michigan University Police Department, University of Michigan Division of Public Safety, Washtenaw Community College Public Safety Department, Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office and the Ypsilanti Police Department.

Since its first graduating class in 1987, the WCC Police Academy has prepared 1,444 recruits for a career in law enforcement, including 437 who started their career with a Washtenaw County-based department.

The Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office – which had six recruits in the Class of 2025 – has sponsored more recruits through the academy (166) than any other agency.

LINE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL

In his Class President address, recruit Anthony Stewart reminded his classmates that when they put on their uniforms and badges, they "assume the role of guardian, protectors of public safety."

"This is not just a title, it's a calling," Stewart said. "We are the line between good and evil, and it's our duty to uphold the values that keep our communities safe. Embrace this role with pride and recognize the honor it brings."

HOMEGROWN TALENT

This was the first year that WCC hired officers directly from the academy.

WCC Chief of Public Safety John Leacher said it was only natural for him to capitalize on the college's highly respected, in-house police academy for new hires.

Leacher said it's important to him that the WCC Police Academy spends many hours training recruits about cultural diversity, unbiased policing, de-escalation strategies, interpersonal communications and more. In all, the recruits receive more than 800 hours of classroom and hands-on training.

"Policing in a college environment requires connecting with the campus community and the only way to do that is to understand your community," Leacher said.

Craig Sinclair, a University of Michigan recruit, earned the class's High Academic Achievement Award and was named the Outstanding Recruit.

Joyce VanMeter, Senior Director of WCC Public Safety Training, wrapped up the graduation ceremony by recapping what the academy graduates had accomplished over the previous 18 weeks of training.

"I encourage you to remain focused on continuing education and training. Practice, practice, practice," VanMeter said. "Be proud of the profession you have chosen, be honest with yourself at all times, and be the officers we know you can be."

Each member of the graduating class completed more than 805 hours of classroom and hands-on training. ●

PHOTO BY JD SCOTT

Ypsilanti Police Department recruit Jason Bond (center) is welcomed to the department by sergeant Martez Gibbs (left) and officer Sabrina Dungan (right), a fellow WCC Police Academy graduate.

This is a condensed version of a longer story available at wccnet.edu/news.

Corrections Academy grads join the front lines of rehabilitation and reform

By RICH REZLER
Director of Communications

Washtenaw Community College celebrated the graduation of 17 new corrections officers from the WCC Corrections Academy Fall Class of 2025.

The graduates, already employed by sheriff's offices in Washtenaw, Ingham, Lenawee and Monroe counties, completed the training required by the Michigan Sheriffs' Coordinating & Training Council.

The Council mandates that newly hired officers complete an approved academy program within their first year of employment. WCC's Public Service Training Department operates one of 10 approved academies in the state.

To earn certification, graduates completed 160 hours of instruction across 14 training modules, culminating in a comprehensive final exam. The curriculum is taught by a team of current and retired professionals.

Class President Grant Lovejoy of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office encouraged his classmates to make a difference.

"Many people think corrections is just about turning keys and doing headcounts, but it's so much more," Lovejoy said. "We're not just there to enforce rules or pass trays. We're there to listen, to guide, and to treat people like people. We're not robots. We're humans, too." ●

This is a condensed version of a longer story available at wccnet.edu/news.

PHOTO BY JD SCOTT

Members of the WCC Corrections Academy prepare to recite the Pledge of Allegiance before the Class of 2025 graduation ceremony.

ACCESS RETENTION COMPLETION

THE WCC FOUNDATION

Kiwanis Club continues support of local students

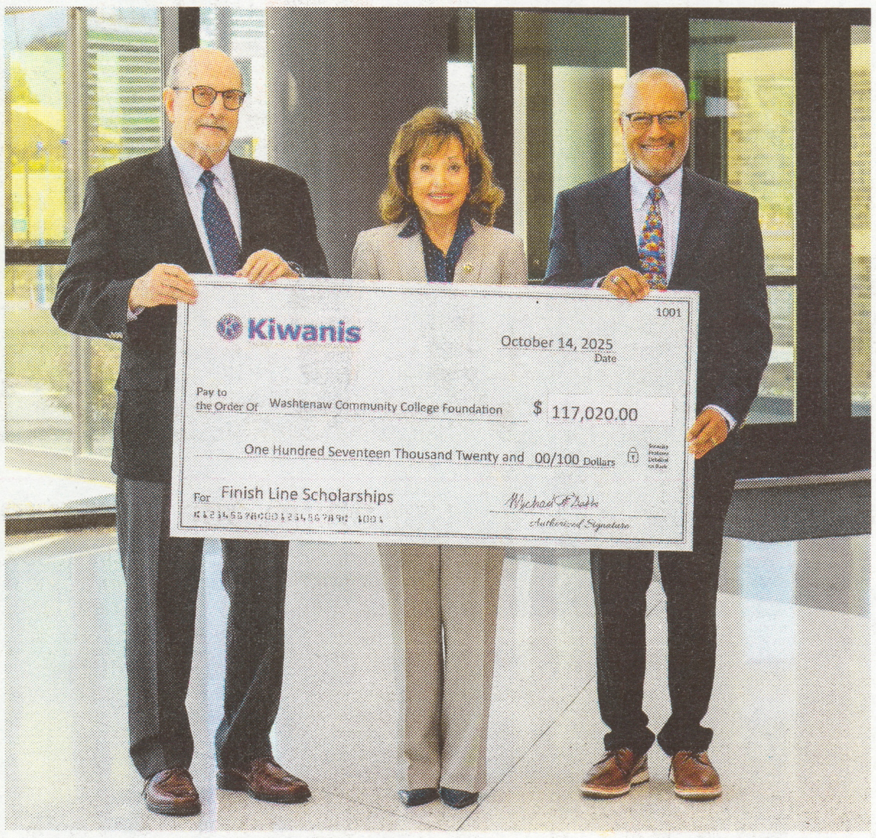

Kiwanis
1001
October 14, 2025
Date
Pay to the Order Of Washtenaw Community College Foundation
$ 117,020.00
One Hundred Seventeen Thousand Twenty and 00/100 Dollars
For Finish Line Scholarships
Authorized Signature

PHOTO BY JD SCOTT

Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor Foundation directors James Dries (left) and Michael Madison (right) present WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca with a check for more than $117,000 during an annual luncheon that brings together those who donated to the fund with some of the students they support.

Ann Arbor organization's annual donation to WCC grows for eighth consecutive year

The Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor continues to help Washtenaw Community College students reach their finish line.

The philanthropic organization presented the WCC Foundation a check for $117,020 during a recent luncheon that brought club members together with some of the student recipients of the Kiwanis Finish Line Scholarship that their generosity funds.

Kiwanis, which has been awarding college scholarships to local students since the early 1990s, designated the WCC Foundation as the sole recipient of its scholarship budget seven years ago.

That initial donation of $70,000 in 2018 has increased each year since.

"The Kiwanis Club's mission is clear: to help local students earn their degrees faster and with less financial burden," said WCC Chief Philanthropy Officer Nikki Borges.

"Thanks to their continued generosity and dedication, that mission is being fulfilled every day. We're truly thankful for their partnership and commitment to student success."

The endowed Kiwanis Scholarship at WCC covers tuition and books for a full academic year for full-time student recipients and has an approximate value of $3,500 per year.

Students can keep the scholarship for up to three years if they maintain a 2.0 GPA and stay on pace for completion.

Approximately one-quarter of the funds are raised at the Kiwanis Thrift Sale, which offers in-store shopping at 100 N. Staebler Road in Ann Arbor. The store is located off Jackson Road, one mile west of Zeeb.

The remaining three-quarters come directly from individual donations by Kiwanis members, volunteers and other individuals.

For more information about the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor, visit a2kiwanisfoundation.org. For information about donating items to the thrift sale, email donations@a2kiwanis.org.

WCC Foundation funds expansion of laptop program

The Washtenaw Community College Foundation is helping bridge the digital divide for students by committing $75,000 over the next three years to support the college's Laptop Loan Program.

The program began during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that students could continue their studies remotely.

What started as an emergency response has become a vital resource for hundreds of students each semester — particularly those balancing jobs, family responsibilities and coursework.

"Access to reliable technology remains one of the biggest barriers to success for many of our students," said Thad Bowerman, manager of WCC's Academic Success Center, which oversees the program.

"At the beginning of each semester, we typically run out of laptops within the first week. Students line up before we open on the first day of classes, and for some, this is their only real path to taking WCC courses at all."

WCC Chief Philanthropy Officer Nikki Borges said the Foundation is proud to support programs that make education more accessible and impactful for students.

"The Laptop Loan Program is a great example of how philanthropy directly changes lives," Borges said. "When students have the tools they need to learn – whether that's a scholarship, emergency aid, or access to technology – they're better equipped to stay on track and reach their goals. That's what the WCC Foundation is all about."

Along with adding more laptops to the program, the WCC Foundation's new funding will allow the college to begin replacing a portion of the outdated inventory each year, ensuring students continue to have access to up-to-date equipment.

Laptops are available on a first-come, first-served basis and can be checked out for the semester. The original devices were purchased through a grant during the pandemic, but many are now nearing the end of their life cycle.

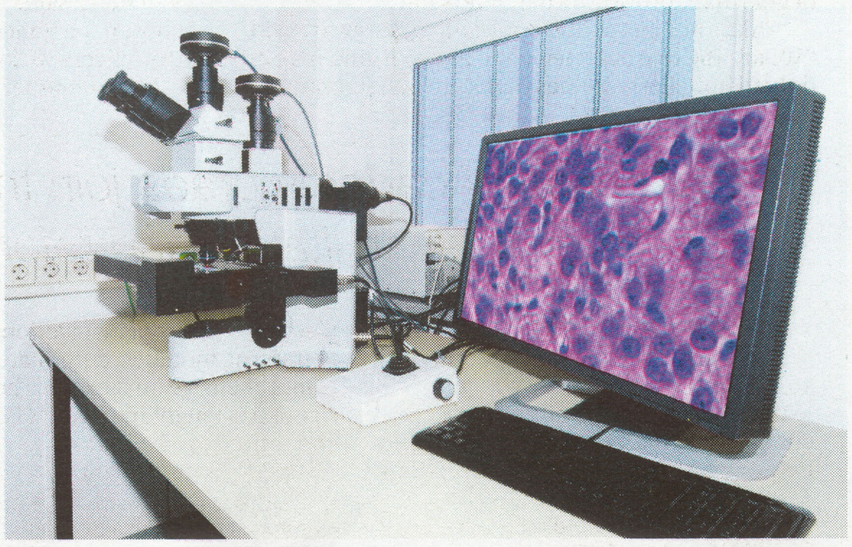
Bowerman said the impact is both immediate and long-lasting.

"We know from surveys and conversations that these laptops make a real difference," he said. "Access to a good laptop allows our students to improve their lives in important and measurable ways, and the Foundation's support helps us continue and expand this essential program."

GETTY IMAGES

Started during the COVID-19 pandemic, WCC's Laptop Loan Program was determined to be a vital ongoing resource for WCC students. Thanks to public donations, the WCC Foundation will grow the program over the next three years.

New digital microscope enhances accessibility and learning at WCC



GETTY IMAGES

A new digital microscope purchased by the WCC Foundation allows instructors to display specimens on a screen, creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

A new Visoria B Digital Laboratory Microscope purchased by the Washtenaw Community College Foundation is expanding access and enhancing instruction in the college's Life Sciences department — especially for students with visual impairments.

Life Sciences faculty member Kalthoum Bayz requested funding for the microscope after learning about its innovative digital capabilities.

"This is a perfect example of how donor support directly enhances the student experience," said Nikki Borges, WCC's Chief Philanthropy Officer. "We're proud to help bring cutting-edge, accessible equipment like this to our classrooms."

Unlike traditional optical microscopes that require users to look directly through the eyepiece, the Visoria B connects to a high-resolution digital display, allowing students to view specimens together on-screen. This makes it particularly valuable for sight-impaired learners, who can magnify, adjust contrast, or use color filters to better distinguish microscopic details.

"This microscope allows instructors to display real-time, high-resolution images of specimens to the entire class, enabling them to guide students through complex techniques together," Bayz said. "By integrating this advanced technology, we're fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment where every student, regardless of visual or physical ability, can fully engage in hands-on scientific discovery."

The Visoria B microscope is designed for clinical-grade histopathology and cytopathology, featuring encoded optics for reproducible settings, ergonomic controls for long lab sessions, and integrated digital documentation through Leica's Enersight software.

Instructors can easily capture, annotate, and share images, improving both collaboration and accuracy in lab exercises.

The purchase reflects the WCC Foundation's commitment to supporting faculty innovation and student success through technology investments that make learning more inclusive and interactive.

Local teens visit for Manufacturing Day

By FRAN LeFORT
Director of Media Relations

Washtenaw Community College hosted its annual Manufacturing Day in October, welcoming almost 200 students from across the Washtenaw Intermediate School District and providing the opportunity to see a wide range of high-demand, high-wage career paths.

Students from Ann Arbor Huron, Chelsea, Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Lincoln and Manchester high schools were among those in attendance, along with others that make up the South & West Washtenaw Consortium.

Students toured WCC's Mechatronics Lab, CNC Lab and Welding Lab and visited with local employers and representatives from Michigan Works! Southeast.

Studies predict a significant demand for manufacturing workers nationwide, with a potential for 1.9 million of those jobs to go unfilled due to persistent talent and skills gaps. Of open jobs, most will come from retirement and others from industry growth. On average, manufacturing workers in the U.S. earned $102,629 in 2023.

Ypsilanti High School senior Jamir Pratt said he attended the Manufacturing Day event because he wanted to explore different career paths.

"There are a lot of opportunities, no matter what your interest is," said Pratt. "Everyone let us know how everything is really connected."

SHAPING THE FUTURE

Manufacturing isn't just about making things. It's about shaping the future.

Harper Doyle, a junior at Manchester, said his time at Manufacturing Day helped shape his future decisions. After being unsure of his future before the visit, he's now certain he wants to study welding at WCC.

"In my years in the classroom, I have seen the importance of this foundational knowledge and how it helps students follow a plan to continue on into one of the fields," said Joseph Freeman, a Manchester teacher. "It's cool to see these career explorations expand to show our students all the wonderful opportunities that are out there for careers."

Duane Moss, a Chelsea High School teacher, said Manufacturing Day helps connect students in the classroom to the pathways that exist after high school.

"It's a great way to showcase the many career options in manufacturing and help students start envisioning themselves in those roles," Moss said.

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES

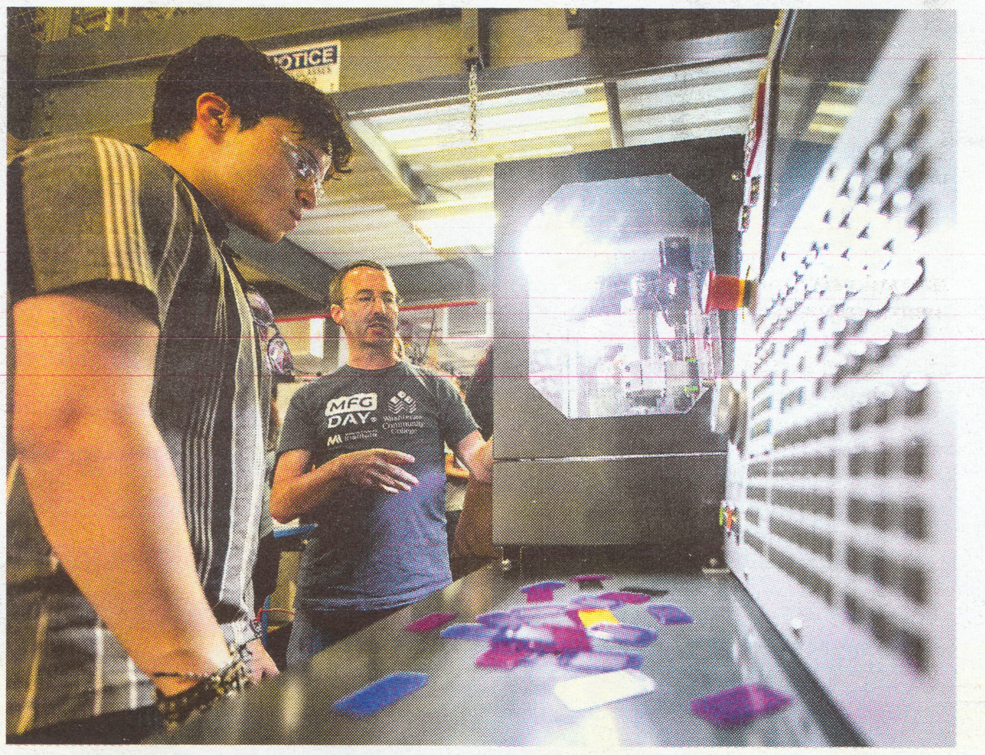
Manufacturing Day is just another example of WCC continuing to connect students with real-world experiences that open doors to the future.

"Our students always look forward to seeing the WCC labs and equipment firsthand, especially the kinds of advanced tools and technologies that aren't always accessible at the high school level," said Moss. "They get to see what it really takes to succeed and how the technical skills they're building now can open doors to college and career success."

A number of local companies sent representatives to talk about career opportunities with the students.

"We greatly appreciate the sponsors and partners who made this year's activities possible," said Kyrsten Rue, WCC's Assistant Dean of Career and Technical Education. ●

This is a condensed version of a longer story available at wccnet.edu/news.



Above, WCC Machine Tool and CNC faculty member Al Coleman describes a process to a local high school student during Manufacturing Day.

At left, WCC Welding instructor Alex Pazkowski describes features of the college's welding lab.

PHOTOS BY JD SCOTT

CAREER & INTERNSHIP FAIR

Above, Business Administration student Max Nickl connects with an employer during Washtenaw Community College's Fall 2025 Career & Internship Fair.

The bi-annual event drew 67 employers representing a wide range of industries, while 169 WCC students and 66 community members attended to explore opportunities.

Hosted by the college's Center for Career Success, the fair is part of WCC's ongoing commitment to link education with employment and help students take their next career step.

The next Career & Internship Fair is scheduled for March 25, 2026, also in the Morris Lawrence Building. Learn more at wccnet.edu/careerfair. All career fairs are free and open to the public.

Dual enrollment numbers rising

Dual enrollment is growing rapidly across the country, and the numbers tell a compelling story at Washtenaw Community College.

Since 2015, the number of dual-enrolled high school students at WCC has nearly doubled, from 847 to 1,489.

The college credit hours they've earned have soared from 6,538 to 10,966.

Why the surge? Students and families recognize two key benefits:

- Saving time and money by earning college credit while still in high school.
- Smoothing the transition to the academic and social demands of a four-year university.

In Michigan, most public school districts cover the cost of college classes for high school students – removing financial barriers and widening access.

James Spencer, who just finished his first year at the University of Michigan, took full advantage during his senior year of high school. He enrolled in Composition I (ENG 111) and General Astronomy (AST 111) at WCC.

"One specific advantage dual enrolling gave me was that the composition class replaced my first-year writing requirement at U-M," he says. "That allowed me to get a bit ahead and make for a smoother path my freshman year. I also arrived at U-M knowing how college classes work in a way, so the general transition to university was much easier for me."

WCC is also home to Washtenaw Technical Middle College, a charter high school where students become dually enrolled after demonstrating academic and soft-skill readiness.

Most WTMC graduates leave with both a high school diploma and college credentials. ●

For more information on dual enrollment at WCC, visit wccnet.edu/dual-enroll.

What Do You Call Someone Who Attended WCC?
Employed.©

Enroll for Winter Today!
Classes start January 12

wccnet.edu/enroll